(e) the granting of leases of fisheries in the reservoir and in the main canal;

(f) the proper utilization of the land acquired for the purpose of the project; and

(g) any other functions incidental or connected with the functions specified in clauses (a) to (f)."

Sir, it is a fact that the Government of Karnataka have requested the Government of India to abolish this Board. Amongst other reasons the Karnataka Government has contended that the functions of the Board which were mainly intended when it was created are no more existing and the purpose for which it was created has been served and, much more so, the dam and the reservoir are located in Karnataka itself. So they say that they can maintain the dam and reservoir and there is no need to maintain the Board and it should be abolished.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Sir, is it not a fact that seeing the work of this Board in the last few years, the responsibility for maintaining this reservoir is rather diffused, as a result of which there have been leakages and backlog of maintenance has been accumulated, for which reason the Government of Karnataka has requested the Centre to abolish this Board?

Secondly, Sir, I would like to know whether the full potential created by this Project has been fully utilised. If not, to what extent has it been utilised?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, the potential created by this Project in Karnataka on the left bank is 2.44 lakh hectares and the right bank is 1.18 lakh hectares. In Andhra Pradesh the potential created on the right bank side is 1.65 lakh hectares. Sir, it is true that there is much scope for improvement in the functioning of the Board and we are taking steps to see how things can be best improved to serve the people of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Sir, a perusal of the functions that have been entrusted to the Tungabhadra Project Board gives a clear indication that these are of a permanent nature. In view of this, will the Minister assure that the Board will not be abolished in view of the permanent nature of the functions that have been assigned to the Board?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, whether it is the Board or any other agency, the functions will naturally be to maintain properly. And who should do it has no element of permanancy. A permanent element is, of course, to maintain the Project for better utilisation by the people. But there is nothing permanent in the existence of a particular agency.

Freight Equalisation Scheme for steel

*292. SHRI RAMKRISHNA MAZUMDER:

SHRI CHITTA BASU:†

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have accepted the recommendation of the B. D. Pande Committee regarding the phasing out of the freight equalisation scheme in respect of steel;

(b) whether Government have decided to work out the modalities within a time-frame;

(c) whether the modalities have been finally worked out; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) A number of representations have been received from States located farther away from steel plants

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Chitta Basu.

against phasing out of freight equalisation scheme in respect of iron and steel. These views will have to be taken into account while working out the modalities.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, first of all, I would like to remind the hon. Minister that on July 13, 1985 it was stated by the then Minister that modalities would be worked out as soon as possible. I think he assured that it would be done within three months. Again this was also repeated on 26th November, 1985 that the modalities were being worked out. In this case, Sir, time-frame is very much important. Would the hon. Minister be pleased to assure the House that the modalities would be worked out within a definite time-frame?

SHRI K. C. PANT: Sir, the difficulty in giving such an assurance is that some States are strongly in favour of early phasing out and some States are strongly against. And the States which are farther away from the steel plants make out a case that for 30 years freight-equalisation has been in operation and that any sudden departure from this practice will lead to great difficulties for them, that adjustments will have to be made, that industries which have been set up on the basis of freight-equalisation will suddenly face a new situation, that more resources will have to be found and so on. I think, one must have some understanding for their predicament also, and that is the reason why one has to be careful in the timing of the phasing out.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, I think the hon. Minister is well aware of the fact that the eastern region is being deprived of the locational advantages because of this policy. Would the Government take into consideration while taking a final decision about this phenomenon which I have referred to and further assure the House that the Government would not yield to the pressure of any interested lobby in the country?

SHRI K. C. PANT: I have no difficulty in giving the assurance in regard to not yielding to lobbying or pressure either from my friend or anybody else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Reduction of steel prices

*283. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to bring down the steel prices in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal; and

(c) by when the prices are likely to be reduced?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Application of nuclear science in Agriculture

*285. SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what important research in agriculture is being done through the application of nuclear science; and

(b) what is the number of research centres where the work is being done for the use of radio-active isotopes in agriculture?